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Allen-Scott Report

Ethics Inquiry Moving Slowly

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Mr. Allen

STATINTL

The Senate Ethics Committee's still-unscheduled hearings on Senator Thomas Dodd tell a great deal about both the committee and the sensational charges against him.

There were three reasons behind the committee's decision to start its thorny inquiry by delving into the Connecticut Democrat's alleged relations with a registered lobbyist of a foreign country rather than the far more serious accusations concerning his political contributions:

(1) The six-member committee (three Democrats, three Republicans) is far from certain it has authority to investigate Dodd's political finances. In their private deliberations, committeemen have expressed serious doubts about this. One, a distinguished lawyer, strongly questioned such jurisdiction, citing the fact that the resolution creating the committee says nothing about this.

The explosive issue is still pending. The committee has asked for legal opinions from various authorities, including former Supreme Court Justice Charles Whittaker, its consultant.

Veteran senators are predicting the committee will back away from this knotty problem, and leave it up to the Internal Revenue Service to unravel.

(2) At least two members of the Ethics Committee and scores of other senators and congressmen of both parties have been beneficiaries of the same kind of fund-raising testimonials as staged for Dodd. In recent years these affairs have virtually become a "way of life" for politicians, particularly members of Congress. The annual "take" from these events runs into hundreds of thousands of dollars; in an election year, probably millions.

Understandably, the Ethics Committee is very loath to point a finger of guilt. It would have to start in its own back.

As Senator Eugene McCarthy, D-Minn., one of the committee members who has profited considerably from testimonials, pertinently observed, "He who is without sin among you, cast the first stone."

Among other lawmakers who have benefited from testimonials and subsidies of various kinds are: Senators Everett Dirksen, R-

Ill.; James Pearson, R-Kans.; Thurston Morton, R-Ky.; Frank Moss, D-Utah; Quentin Burdick, D - N.D.; Birch Bayh, D - Ind.; Thomas McIntyre, D-N.H.; and Representatives Morris Udall, D-Ariz.; Roman Pucinski, D-Ill.; James Morrison, D-La.; Samuel Friedel, D-Md.; Edward Garmatz, D-Md.; John Blatnik, D-Minn.; Richard Bolling, D-Mo.; Arnold Olsen, D - Mont.; Walter Baring, D-Nev.; L. Oliva Huot, D-N.H.; John Dent, D-Pa.; George Grider, D-Tenn.; David King, D-Utah; Thomas Foley, D-Wash.; John Race, D-Wis.; Ken Dyal, D-Calif.; William Hungate, D-Mo.; Paul Krebs, D - N.J.; William Anderson; D-Tenn., and Ken Hechler, D-W. Va.

(3) By starting its public proceedings with the lobbyist charges, the Ethics Committee is in a position to air how some 4,000 of Dodd's letters and other records were obtained from his files. Five one-time employees are involved in this.

The committee has two versions of how it was pulled off. One that the papers were taken from Dodd's files at night to a downtown office where they were duplicated and returned before morning. The other account is that they were duplicated in Dodd's office over a period of nights.

Among the early witnesses slated to be grilled are former Dodd employees. The committee determined to question them for a special reason:

Before the Dodd case erupted, the committee had discussed formulating a set of rules and regulations to govern the conduct and activities of Senate employees. It was felt such a code was essential as a consequence of the sensational Bobby Baker expose - which led to the establishment of the committee.

The Dodd affair has reinforced committee sentiment on the necessity for a code for Senate employees. That's why Dodd's ex-staff workers are slated for blunt interrogation.

The FBI has completed its investigation of the reputed "pilfering" of Dodd's files and submitted its findings to the Justice Department's Criminal Division. When the division will make its report, General Katzenbach and what they will be, time will tell.